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ABSTRACT

This annual report of the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) describes the agency's extension and research activities from October, 1996, to September 30, 1997. SRDC is one of four regional centers coordinating rural development research and extension education programs cooperatively with the land-grant institutions. SRDC cooperates with 29 universities to serve Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Virginia. The first part of the report describes SRDC's funding, sponsors, audiences, staff, board of directors, advisors, and five priority areas. SRDC priorities are: (1) strengthening and supporting the capacity of Southern land-grant institutions and their partners to conduct rural development research and outreach education; (2) enhancing the economic, environmental, and social well-being of rural communities and people; (3) strengthening the human capital resources of the region's rural communities; (4) improving rural Southerners' access to vital community services; and (5) enhancing the capacity of rural people and communities to carry out their expanded responsibilities in the design, management, and financing of government programs. The remainder of the report describes SRDC-sponsored activities for each priority area and miscellaneous activities. Publications are listed within activity descriptions. (SAS)

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ED 417 058

1997 Annual Progress Report

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SRDC Number 209

December 1997

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1997 ANNUAL REPORT
of the
Southern Rural Development Center

The Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) is one of four regional centers coordinating rural development research and extension (education) programs cooperatively with the land grant institutions regionally and nationally. The Centers support and strengthen individual state efforts in rural areas by developing networks of university research and extension faculties from a variety of disciplines to address rural issues. Leaders across the region develop strategies for dealing with those issues and share them via research, conferences, publications and other educational activities and materials. Other Centers are at Iowa State University, Oregon State University and The Pennsylvania State University.

Funding

Funding for the Centers is through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES). The Centers collaborate with state, regional and national public and private organizations and with each other to leverage support from a variety of sources to supplement federal funding and to increase program effectiveness.

Sponsors

The Center is sponsored by Alcorn State University (ASU), an 1890 institution, and Mississippi State University (MSU), an 1862 institution. The Center is located at MSU where it has been housed since 1974.

The Center works with 29 land grant institutions in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Virginia.

Audiences

The Center has served the Southern region since 1974, providing a base for coordinating the academic leadership of rural development faculties. The SRDC works in liaison with research and extension faculties; with state, regional and national policy makers; with community decision makers; and with other rural development professionals. The ultimate beneficiaries are the rural people of the South who receive help through the research and education programs developed by land grant personnel in cooperation with the SRDC.

Staff

A considerable amount of time this year went into the national search efforts for selecting a new director of the Center. In April, the SRDC Board of Directors announced that Lionel J. "Bo" Beaulieu was offered and had accepted the position of director effective August 1997.

The Center functions with a small staff consisting of the director, an assistant to the director, a writer/editor and an administrative secretary. While the search for a director was underway, the 1996-97 staff was headed by interim co-directors.

Interim Co-Director (July 1996-August 1997)
John E. Lee, Jr., Professor and Head
Department of Agricultural Economics
Mississippi State University

Interim Co-Director (July 1996-August 1997)
Associate Director (August 1997-)
Jerome Burton, Associate Division Director
Cooperative Extension
Alcorn State University

Director
Lionel J. Beaulieu (August 1997-)

Assistant to the Director
Bonnie P. Teater

Writer/Editor
Jacqueline F. Tisdale

Administrative Secretary
Sandra K. Payne

Structure

Regional participation is a strength of the Center. The organizational structure is designed to foster active involvement of the states in program determination.

Board of Directors. A Board of Directors establishes policies and sets guidelines. Members come from the region's 1862 and 1890 land grant institutions and the private sector. Composition includes three 1862 extension representatives, one 1890 extension representative, three 1862 research representatives, one 1890 research representative and one representative each from the private sector and the Farm Foundation. Ex-officio representatives from Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service-USDA and Economic Research Service-USDA are advisors. Current board members include the following:

Extension representatives
Ronald A. Brown
Mississippi State University

Lawrence Carter
Florida A&M University

Pedro Rodríguez Domínguez
University of Puerto Rico

Chester Fehlis, vice chair
Texas A&M University

Private sector representative
Dennis Robertson
Arkansas Farm Bureau

Research representatives
James A. Boling
University of Kentucky

Leroy Davis
Alcorn State University

Thomas Klindt
University of Tennessee

Vance H. Watson
Mississippi State University

Farm Foundation representative
Walter Armbruster, chair
Oak Brook, Illinois

Advisors

Bob Koopman, Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service-USDA

Patrick J. Sullivan
Economic Research Service-USDA

Program Advisory Committees. Program advisory committees on individual land grant campuses contribute to the SRDC Regional Program Advisory Committee. The Regional Program Advisory Committee meets biennially to focus the activities of the Center on specific areas of need.

Center Activities

The following section of this annual report provides insight to extension and research activities from October 1, 1996, to September 30, 1997. The variety of projects and the diversity of the people and organizations involved attest to the value of the Southern Rural Development Center and to the impact it has on the lives of the rural people and communities in the region it serves. The report is organized by five priority areas:

- **Strengthen and support the capacity of Southern land grant institutions and their partners to conduct rural development research and outreach education**
- **Enhance the economic, environmental and social well being of rural communities and people**
- **Strengthen the human capital resources of the region's rural communities**
- **Improve rural Southerners' access to vital community services**
- **Enhance the capacity of rural people and communities to carry out their expanded responsibilities in the design, management and financing of government programs**

Priority Area 1: Strengthen and support the capacity of Southern land grant institutions and their partners to conduct rural development research and outreach education

SRDC Consortium. In an effort to further strengthen our communication with land grant faculty involved in social science activities in the rural South, the SRDC is establishing a Southern Rural Development Consortium. The intent is to further enhance communications between the SRDC and land grant faculty in the region. Individuals who are part of the Consortium will receive periodic updates from the SRDC on grant/contract opportunities. Also, the consortium list will prove invaluable in identifying individuals having specialized rural development expertise (i.e., labor markets, rural health, rural education, etc.). As grant opportunities relevant to the priority issues of the SRDC present themselves, it will be possible to quickly identify the pool of social scientists in the South that we can invite to work in partnership with us in the development and implementation of these grants. The Consortium is available to any land grant faculty member with interest in rural development issues. This includes faculty in agricultural economics, rural sociology, youth development, human sciences, education, or other related disciplines.

Grant Connections*: *Rural Development Funding Opportunities. A new electronic newsletter titled, *Grant Connections* was implemented in September 1997. It is primarily for the faculty of land grant colleges and universities in the South. The Center works to increase the capacity of the land grant institutions in the Southern region through support of activities in agricultural economics, education, human sciences, rural sociology, youth development and other related disciplines. The Center hopes this particular effort will keep the Southern land grant faculty abreast of funding opportunities in the rural development area and will result in extramural funding for the faculty member with interest in rural development issues. *Grant Connections* is produced periodically as opportunities develop.

An example of the success of SRDC sharing grant opportunity information is in Kentucky. Rick Maurer, University of Kentucky, reported that an Extension county agent nominated a community leader for an award from Wal-Mart. The leader received $1,000 leadership award. SRDC had forwarded information about the Hometown Leadership award to the Community Development and Family and Consumer Sciences program leaders; Maurer then passed the information on to agents in his state.

Capsules is the newsletter of the Southern Center. Published 10 times a year, it is a vehicle for keeping land grant personnel and stakeholders informed about regional activities. *Capsules* is now available electronically by e-mail and is available on the Center's homepage at www.ces.msstate.edu/~srdc. More than 3,000 educators, researchers, practitioners, local officials and private citizens interested in improving the quality of life in small communities and rural areas of the South subscribe to some version of *Capsules*.

Champion Communities (CCs). Communities that made applications through the Empowerment Zone (EZ)/Enterprise Community (EC) program of the federal government for funds to implement their strategic plans but failed to receive funding were designated Champion Communities. One hundred twenty-two of the 194 designated Champion Communities are in the Southern Region. The SRDC first became involved with the CCs through the Mississippi Champion Communities at their state meeting. The community representatives of the CCs confirmed the need for active involvement and strategies to support the designated communities across the region. The first step in expanding support for the CCs began in a four-state area–Alabama, Georgia, Florida and South Carolina. The Center is helping organize

a regional meeting involving teams from the 30 CCs in these states and representatives from agencies, organizations and institutions. The workshop is planned for late Spring 1998. The Center is also seeking extramural funds for travel for the CC teams. If this process is as successful and beneficial to these CCs as anticipated, then SRDC will implement similar efforts in other subregions of the South. Procedures and outcomes experienced in the South will be shared with the sister regional rural development centers to promote success among the Champion Communities throughout the nation.

As a continuing effort to provide support to CCs, SRDC forwarded a notice of funds available from Hitachi Corporation for community grants. One Arkansas CC prepared a proposal and received more than $100,000 for work in their community. This success reemphasizes the value of regional communication between the Center and Champion Communities in the region.

Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists (SAAS). Staff from the SRDC participated in meetings of the SERA-IEG 16 (infrastructure and economic well being) during the pre-session. Proceedings were published by the SRDC. See page 8, *Rural Infrastructure as a Cause and Consequence of Rural Economic Development and Quality of Life*, SRDC #207.

The Center took leadership in coordinating a joint session between sections of agricultural economics and rural sociology titled "Strengthening the Applied Research Base for Rural Development Action Programs." Dr. Greg Taylor, Texas A&M University, Dr. Colien Hefferan, CSREES/USDA, and Dr. John E. Lee, participated in the session moderated by Dr. David Freshwater, University of Kentucky. This session led to the creation of the Southern Rural Development Consortium.

Program Leaders Committee (PLC). More than 150 participants from the 1890 and 1862 institutions in the South participated in the 8th Annual meeting of the Southern Region Program Leaders meeting August 27-30 in Tallahassee. "Building Collaborative Partnerships" was the theme. In addition to serving on committees, SRDC staff coordinates logistics, hotel contracts, bookkeeping, registration and material preparation. The Center recoups out of pocket expenses through registration fees.

National Rural Development Partnership. SRDC continues dialogue with the executive directors of the State Rural Development Councils in the Southern region. In additional to attending their national meetings and convening regional sessions, the Center staff is bringing the research community of the land grant system to bear on the activities of the Councils. The Center received funding from the Economic Research Service/USDA to support these efforts. As critical issues are identified, the Center will mobilize researchers to address these needs.

Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). At the request of a regional GPRA task force, the SRDC coordinated a regional training meeting with more than 125 participants in Memphis, Tennessee. All out of pocket expenses were reimbursed plus financial support for time and travel of Center staff.

Priority Issue 2. Enhance the economic, environmental and social well being of rural communities and people

Home-Based and Micro Business Education Curriculum. *CaShing in on Business Opportunities: A Guide to Building a Home-Based/Micro Business Program* is a soon-to-be-released Extension curriculum for educators who work with home-based and micro businesses. The comprehensive

curriculum was developed by the Home-Based and Micro Business National Design Team of the Communities in Economic Transition National Initiative. The director of SRDC serves on the design team. Beth Duncan, Mississippi State University, was co-chair of the design team. The SRDC editor was developmental editor of this project. The curriculum will be published later this year through the Southern Rural Development Center and Mississippi State University Extension Service. Extension training will be available beginning April 1998.

"**What Works? Water and Environmental Programming.**" The Center provided publicity and material preparation support for this regional conference. More than 225 persons attended. The SRDC had a representative on the planning committee. Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service was the lead facilitator. Farm Foundation provided $5,000 for follow-up activities which focused on lessons learned at the county level. CSREES contributed $10,000 to support the conference. The Center managed the financial process.

Southern Regional Consortium To Address Food Processing Industry Competitiveness. The Southern Rural Development Center funded an effort to link the land grant system of the 13-state Southern Region into an alliance to address food processing technology issues, technical assistance resources, and collaborative opportunities. The project was conducted by a design team of Extension and research representatives from across the land grant system in the South. The consortium produced a directory, SRDC Publication #205, of the resources available to support the food processing industry in the region. The directory provides a concise listing of persons and their specific expertise, facilities and equipment and other related resources such as publications, newsletters, fact sheets, videos, etc. Joe McGilberry, Mississippi State University, served as chair of the regional design team.

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE). The Southern Rural Development Center coordinated regional telephone discussions regarding the possibilities of submitting a proposal to the Southern Region SARE program. Participants in the discussions included the following: Owusu Bandele, Southern University; Magid Dagher, Alcorn State University; Bert English, University of Tennessee; Lee Meyer, University of Kentucky; Mickie Swisher, University of Florida; Jack Thigpen, Texas A&M University; Don Voth, University of Arkansas. While the several meetings were beneficial in different ways to the participants, they decided against submitting a proposal for multi-state project.

The Reference Book on Regional Well-Being, U.S. Regions, the Black Belt, Appalachia. SRDC Publication #203 is the product of a study funded by the Center. Ronald C. Wimberley, North Carolina State University, and Libby V. Morris, University of Georgia, produced the book that analyzes the poverty, education, unemployment, and dependence within and across the four major U.S. regions and two Southern subregions. Each condition is analyzed in terms of region, race and rurality. Along with the text, results are presented in three maps, 15 spreadsheet tables and 36 graphs.

National Extension Tourism Conference. An SRDC staff person is on the National Tourism Planning Committee planning a tourism conference for May 1998. The National Extension Tourism Conference focuses on for tourism, travel and outdoor recreation policy, development and marketing. It is intended for Extension personnel, Sea Grant and other tourism-related faculty, RC&D staff, and others interested in tourism development, sustainability and management.

Conducting an Effective Waste Pesticide Disposal Program, is a pilot program with Jimmy Bonner, Project Coordinator, Mississippi State University, as principal investigator. In concert with the

Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce and other related agencies, the Mississippi State University Extension Service planned the program in early 1994 to address the problem of waste agricultural pesticides and their containers. The goal was to reduce the amount of waste pesticides on farms and determine if such a program would be feasible in different areas of that state and other states. The program collected 23,000 pounds one day; five follow-up programs collected 257,000 pounds of waste farm pesticides for disposal by a licensed contractor. That success led to SRDC funding the development of a publication describing how to conduct similar programs in other areas. The publication will be for regional dissemination. A video will be developed later.

Interstate Water Allocation Economics and Incentive-Based Approaches to Environmental Regulatory Reform, SRDC #206. Public policies regarding the use and distribution of natural resources and the environment continue to occupy a significant amount of the national resource economist's time. This proceedings contains selected papers from two workshops sponsored by the Southern Regional Information Exchange Group-10 in 1995 and 1996 that addressed two areas of particular interest. The 1995 workshop, "Interstate Water Allocation Economics," discussed three aspects of interstate water allocation: water allocation institutions; state water law and regulatory issues; and basin-wide water management models. In 1996 a second workshop, "Incentive-Based Approaches to Environmental Regulatory Reform," provided a synopsis of various approaches used to establish price signals or to foster markets for environmental protection activities; discussed some emerging wetlands mitigation innovations; and commented on efforts to support states' use of enforcement flexibility to provide compliance incentives for small communities. Lynn Reinschmiedt, Mississippi State University, and Upton Hatch, Auburn University, served as co-editors.

Priority Issue 3. Strengthen the human capital resources of the region's rural communities

Linking Family and Community Strengths Evaluation Follow-up. The SRDC, W.K. Kellogg and Farm Foundation funded 12 mini-grants as a result to the 1996 conference "Linking Family and Community Strengths." Six months after the SRDC-sponsored conference all those attending the meeting received an evaluation form. While an at-conference evaluation was completed, the planning committee also wanted to document post-conference changes. As an example of the knowledge gained from the conference, one third of those responding to the questionnaire have conducted an in-service training in their state borrowing conference materials and ideas. The "Linking" grants funded several Cooperative Extension Service educators' initial attempts to partner with colleagues in other areas of specialization and with outside organizations and agencies. Case examples coming from the 12 grants provide the basis for a document, "Evaluation and Impacts of Linking Family and Community Strengths Conference."

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Project. SRDC received $16,000 from the TVA Rural Studies Center for a project, "Human Capital Endowments and Labor Force Experiences of Urban-Rural Southerners: A Longitudinal Study." A graduate student is assisting in the study to examine the human capital resources of a cadre of Southerners who were part of a national panel study, "High School and Beyond." This study will offer specific information about the opportunities and obstacles experienced by Southerners advancing into the work force, and how their experiences might be shaped by the human resources they bring to the marketplace. The study will produce an article for academic audiences addressing the link between human resource attributes and labor market experiences of Southerners, a document for the public on the human capital endowments and labor force experiences of Southerners, etc. and providing public policy implications for the region.

After School Education and Enrichment Model for School-Aged Youth. This SRDC-funded project designed an educational model to improve the academic performance, to build self-confidence and to prepare students K-8 to be productive members of society. The program was conducted by Alcorn State University in three southwest Mississippi school districts. Orlenthea McGowan is the principal investigator. Results have shown marked improvements in the areas addressed. The project involved the 1890 land grant colleges and universities, parents, community-based organizations and public and private sector agencies in the educational process to improve students' successes. An After School Model Implementation Guidebook is being developed for publication through SRDC.

W.K Kellogg Foundation Tri-State Meeting. SRDC participated in a tri-state meeting of Kellogg-funded projects in Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas. In addition to providing an educational exhibit of ongoing SRDC activities, SRDC staff had the opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest with teams from the tri-state area. Most of the teams were community-based.

Priority Area 4: Improve rural Southerners' access to vital community services

2nd National Minority Rural Health Conference. SRDC served as a co-host for the National Rural Health Association's health conference. Discussion centered on the opportunities provided by the Cooperative Extension Service in helping communities make decisions regarding health care. The Center's presentation highlighted community resources available throughout the Southern region. SRDC kept the Community Development and Family and Consumer Science program leaders informed about opportunities for collaborative partnerships developed during the conference.

Rural Health Conference. The Southern Rural Development Center led in developing a regional educational training entitled "Building Partnerships for Rural Health in the South." The planning committee represents 1862 and 1890 Extension Services, State Offices of Rural Health, State Primary Care Association, and the medical community. The training will be November 12-14 in Biloxi, Mississippi. External funding is provided by Farm Foundation and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. These funds will provide mini-grants to support state teams in their efforts to work in rural communities within each of the respective states.

Measuring the Economic Importance of the Health Sector on a Local Economy: A Brief Literature Review and Procedures To Measure Local Impacts, SRDC #202. The Southern Rural Development Center funded a study by three Extension economists to measure the economic importance of the health sector and also to develop procedures to measure the impact. A literature review resulted in the conclusion that direct and secondary impacts on community employment and income often account for 15 to 20 percent of the total community's employment and income. In addition, the review strongly supported the conclusion that a viable health sector is not only important for jobs, but is important if a community wants to attract industry, business or retirees. The study was conducted by economists Gerald Doeksen and Chuck Willoughby, Oklahoma State University, and Tom Johnson, Virginia Tech. A report of the study, with accompanying disk containing an Excel spreadsheet program, was published by and is available from SRDC.

Rural Infrastructure as a Cause and Consequence of Rural Economic Development and Quality of Life, SRDC #207. Declining rural communities, fewer jobs, limited access to information and services and out-migration of youth have forced rural America to rethink its future. The 1997 session of the Southern Extension/Research Activities Information Exchange Group-16 (SERA-IEG 16) focused on

theory research and educational models pertaining to community sustainability. Educational and research models were presented defining sustainability along with overviews of selected efforts to foster community viability. SRDC staff participates in Information Exchange Group meetings and publishes the proceedings. Joe Schmidt, Mississippi State University, served as editor of SRDC #207.

Southern Legislative Conference (SLC) Presentation. SRDC secured speakers from the Southern land-grant community for a "Block Grants and the Implications on Rural Communities" presentation during the fall meeting of the Southern Legislative Conference. John Lee, Mississippi State University, Lou Swanson, University of Kentucky, and Tom Johnson, Virginia Tech, participated on the panel during a plenary session. There has been continuing dialogue with the Southern Legislative Conference and opportunities for collaborative work regarding the SRDC Fund for Rural America planning grant.

Southern Consortium of University Public Service Organizations (SCUPSO). SCUPSO requested SRDC make a presentation with representatives from Southern Governors Association, Southern Growth Policies Board, and Southern Legislative Conference at a regional policy group they convened.

Priority Issue 5. Enhance the capacity of rural people and communities to carry out their expanded responsibilities in the design, management and financing of government programs

Fund for Rural America (FRA). The Center took a pro-active role in keeping rural development professionals in the Southern region informed about the competitive grants fund of USDA. In cooperation with Tom Helms, Executive Director, Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (SAAESD), SRDC established a communication network with persons interested in the FRA and provided updates throughout the process. The Center agreed to support travel to develop multi-state, multi-disciplinary teams to write proposals in response to the request for proposals. Seven requests were received; four were funded for a total of about $11,000.

Fund for Rural America Award. The Southern Rural Development Center applied for and received a center planning grant from Fund for Rural America, a competitive grants program of USDA. The SRDC proposal was combined with one from Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI) and National Association of Counties (NACo). The three institutions formed a partnership and are developing a full proposal for a Center for Policy Devolution and the Rural South. The proposed Center will enable residents of the rural South and other selected subregions of the United States to adjust to federal initiatives that are shifting responsibilities and risks from the federal level to individuals, states and local governments. It will undertake policy analyses to assess the likely impacts of devolution policies on rural people and places in the South. Strategies for ameliorating the negative impacts of devolution will be explored as well. Furthermore, technical assistance will be available for local decision makers seeking access to quantitative analytic models and other decision-support tools commonly available only to leaders situated in metropolitan locales. An additional component of the proposed Center's work will focus on the design and delivery of needed outreach education and training activities that can further enhance the capacity of rural communities to develop and implement action plans that effectively deal with policy devolution impacts at the local level.

Miscellaneous Activities.

Center staff members are called upon to support activities around the region and nation that require small expenditures of resources, both financial and human. Staff members participate in meetings in support of research and extension projects, publish white papers and proceedings, distribute information across the region and a myriad of other rural development program activities not reported separately. Listed below are examples of these activities during 1996-1997.

- Supported the 4-State Heartland Economic Development Conference.
- Participated in the Professional Agricultural Workers Meeting, Tuskegee, Alabama.
- Served as a member of the Mississippi Rural Development Council.
- Presented SRDC report to Southern Extension Directors and Administrators' meeting.
- Participated in the annual meeting of the Southern Extension Public Affairs Committee.

States, Institutions Served by the Southern Rural Development Center

Alabama
Alabama A&M University
Auburn University
Tuskegee University

Arkansas
University of Arkansas
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

Florida
Florida A&M University
University of Florida

Georgia
Fort Valley State University
University of Georgia

Kentucky
Kentucky State University
University of Kentucky

Louisiana
Louisiana State University
Southern University

Mississippi
Alcorn State University
Mississippi State University

North Carolina
North Carolina State University
North Carolina A&T State University

Oklahoma
Langston University
Oklahoma State University

Puerto Rico
University of Puerto Rico

South Carolina
Clemson University
South Carolina State University

Tennessee
Tennessee State University
The University of Tennessee

Texas
Prairie View A&M University
Texas A&M University

Virgin Islands
University of the Virgin Islands

Virginia
Virginia Tech
Virginia State University

Staff

Current staff members of the regional center include the following:

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Jacqueline F. Tisdale, Writer/Editor, E-mail jacquet@mces.msstate.edu
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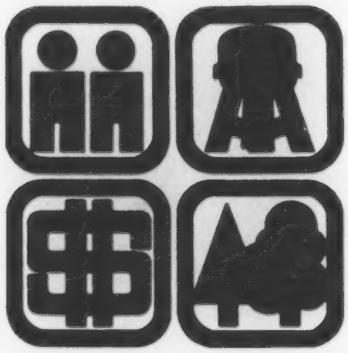
The SRDC is one of four regional rural development centers in the nation. It coordinates cooperation between the Research (Experiment Station) and Extension (Cooperative Extension Service) staffs at land-grant institutions in the South to provide technical consultation, research, training, and evaluation services for rural development. For more information about SRDC activities and publications, write to the Director.



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